

**Board of Trustees
Suffolk County Department of Parks
Recreation and Conservation**

Minutes of December 15, 2005 at Timber Point, Great River

BOARD MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Ray Corwin	Chairman, Member at Large
Aurelio Colina	Vice Chairman, Town of Southampton
Charlie Bender	Member of the Board
Jeanine Dillon	Member of the Board
Gil Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Miles Borden	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
Alexander McKay	Trustee, Town of Huntington

ABSENT:

Vacant	Trustee, Town of Southold
Vacant	Trustee, Town of Shelter Island
John Fritz	Trustee, Town of Babylon
Joseph Miller	Trustee, Town of Islip
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton
Gary Olsen	Trustee, Town of Brookhaven

PARKS DEPARTMENT:

Ronald F. Foley	Commissioner
Tracey Belone	Deputy Commissioner
Colleen Hofmeister	Contracts Manager
Bill Sickles	Sr. Superintendent of Parks
Nick Gibbons	Senior Environmental Analyst
Mary Simonsen	Secretary to the Commissioner

GUESTS:

Lauretta Fischer	Suffolk County Planning Department
Janet Longo	Assistant to the Director of Planning
Christina Farrell	Assistant County Attorney
John J. Ratay	Alliance to Preserve Huntington Harbor
Chuck Hollins	Long Island Beach Buggy Association
Bryan Lilly	On behalf of those in favor of a skateboard park at Smith Point

PUBLIC SPEAKING:

Alliance to Preserve Huntington Harbor - John Ratay of the Alliance to Preserve Huntington Harbor (APHH) was in attendance to speak before the Trustees. The APHH is an organization consisting of six residential associations and representing 3,000 homeowners along Huntington Harbor, their main issues of concern are Coindre Hall Park and the Gold Star Beach Property. APHH was formed to look ahead because of what they consider uncontrolled development along

the harbor. The Town of Huntington and Suffolk County Parks are the predominant users of the property and the APHH has reached out to the town and county, and the organization is disappointed with the lack of progress. Their Executive Committee has solicited an engineering firm to do a study and create a plan of operation and is seeking more cooperation and to develop a relationship with the County and the Town of Huntington. He distributed a letter to the Trustees which had been sent to Commissioner Foley and Trustee McKay (as the representative from Huntington), and asked this group to consider their issues and concerns.

Trustee McKay asked that the APHH give the Trustees time to look over the information in the letter until the next meeting, where the Board had invited the APHH to make a formal presentation.

Chairman Corwin said he and the Commissioner had discussed their request to speak with the Trustees. It had been decided and relayed to Mr. Ratay that it was short notice at the time of their request to make a presentation at the December meeting and asked that Mr. Ratay, along with other representatives from the APHH, make a formal presentation to the Trustees at the next meeting in January.

Camping at Theodore Roosevelt Park - Chuck Hollins of the Long Island Beach Buggy Association spoke to the Trustees regarding the extensive erosion at Theodore Roosevelt County Park in Montauk. The trailer camping areas were hit very hard, he asked if would be possible to consider extending the trailer camping area into the back parking area to accommodate 15-20 additional trailers. The area would not require electricity or running water and it is a flat, sandy area that would not require a lot of work to accommodate this request. If the Trustees are willing to look into this, he asked that they let him know what can be done or what his organization can do to help.

Bill Sickles said that this has been brought up in the past by Trustee White. He said what Mr. Hollins is referring to is the north end of Theodore Roosevelt Park off of East Lake Drive where there is an access that fronts on Block Island Sound. There has been outer beach camping there for people with self-contained trailers and 4-wheel drive vehicles for many years but, due to erosion over the last few years, access has been limited and camping areas severely reduced. This idea has been brought up before by a previous Commissioner of Parks but it created a lot of controversy and opposition because he was looking to limit the outer beach camping and offer camping behind the dunes as an alternative. Montauk residents opposed this because they did not want camping behind the dunes. Mr. Sickles said some of the outer beach campers were opposed to this as well because their perception was that this was leading to elimination of outer beach camping. Mr. Hollins said it was not the intention to eliminate outer beach camping but to ease up the congestion created by the loss of space caused by the erosion.

Chairman Corwin asked if this would result in demand from people that don't normally camp on the beach and don't own 4-wheel drive vehicles, Mr. Sickles replied that it depends on how the policy is worded. If it is still termed as outer beach camping, then they would be required to have an outer beach pass, a 4-wheel drive vehicle and be self contained. Commissioner Foley said it is a proposition that would require further study to define what we really want to do there, get input from campers, go out there with them and local officials to look at it, and come back to the Trustees with a recommendation, if all agree it is an appropriate option. Hopefully in looking at in these ways, questions can be answered if they come up. The Legislature would only be involved if there is capital funding involved. Mr. Hollins said his group and others would do what necessary work they could on a voluntary basis.

Trustee McKay asked how much camping had been lost. Mr. Sickles said it varies. We have 168 outer beach campsite sites, there have been times this season where there were no campers at

all, other times when they were down by 75%; we lost a significant amount of outer beach use because of severe erosion.

Chairman Corwin asked if there were any objections to looking into Mr. Hollins' request. There were none, and it was the consensus of the Board that the Parks Department look into the request.

Skateboard Park at Smith Point - Bryan Lilly came before the Trustees today to ask about the status of the skateboard park at Smith Point. He said the funding was allocated in June of 2004, an RFP (request for proposals) was sent out to architects and designers in April of this year, but to the skateboard community it's still a nonexistent project. He said he wishes the County would explore other options as to the materials that are being proposed for this project and wants the money to be spent wisely. At Smith Point the County is looking at a modular system which, in Mr. Lilly's opinion, initially would cost less but in the long term would cause more maintenance issues than concrete or asphalt.

Deputy Commissioner Bellone said Legislator O'Leary had allocated \$250,000 for this project and the County was working with the public to design the park. DPW hired a consultant who is working with a skateboard company who came up with two designs. They were presented to the public but the community came back with a hand-drawn design of what they wanted. So the designer was asked to take that drawing and come back with a third design plan based on what the community wanted, which has not been received yet. We are not at a point to be able to put anything into a timeline until we get the design in place. The proposed skateboard park would be located northeast of the parking lot near the fishing pier.

The Commissioner said this again takes us back to the debate over what belongs in County parks and what should be in local parks. Our initial look at this said Smith Point isn't a great place for a skate park because you're attracting people to skate over the bridge and through the parking lot and in traffic. He doesn't necessarily think it's a great place for a skate park, and then we're also going to get pressure to put skate parks in other County parks. Skate parks should be near the population center of a community, not in a place like Smith Point, but the master plan for Smith point does include the option for some kind of skate park.

Trustee McKay said the Town of Huntington recently opened a skate park that has been very successful and is producing revenue. Mr. Lilly said the reason it is successful is because it was designed by skateboarders and they had a skateboard committee, you should have two to three designers, not just one. Here only four landscape architects were allowed to bid on the design in the original RFP and only one was chosen, he feels there should be two or three. The Deputy Commissioner pointed out that that is a decision not handled by the Parks Department, but by the Department of Public Works (DPW) who work from a list of accepted firms. The actual construction of the park is to be bid separately.

Chairman Corwin said apparently there are many issues to deal with and the County has a process to follow. Another is whether the County is being asked to fill a need that is traditionally served by towns or villages. There is also no precedent to go on because there are no other County Parks with a skateboard park. Trustee Cardillo said there is a skateboard park in Riverhead and the consensus is that it is underutilized. Mr. Lilly said they could have had two parks for the cost they paid. There is also a skate park built by teenagers behind the Applebee's in Riverhead, when there is already skateboard park down the road because that one doesn't have obstacles and features they want. The Commissioner said it's like everything else; you're not going to make everyone happy.

Deputy Commissioner Bellone said what it boils down to is they are waiting for the official plans

and designs to come back from DPW's architects, and then hold a public meeting after the holidays. Chairman Corwin asked her to keep the Trustees updated and said to Mr. Lilly that the Trustees cannot control the process, it's different in the County than in the towns.

CORRECTIONS TO THE NOVEMBER 17, 2005 MINUTES:

There were no corrections to the November 17th minutes. The motion to accept was made by Trustee Bender, seconded by Vice Chairman Colina, none opposed. The acceptance of the minutes was approved by a vote of 7-0-0.

PLANNING AND REAL ESTATE:

The following acquisitions were presented by Laretta Fischer and Janet Longo:

Hallock Acres Wetlands: located in the Town of Smithtown near Route 347, are wetland parcels behind a residential area and were on last years Master List. The area is part of a series of properties the County is looking to acquire as part of the Smithtown Greenbelt. It falls under the Multifaceted Open Space Preservation Program for passive recreation, it consists of 7/10 of an acre and the County owns some vacant property to the north of this parcel and they are trying to coordinate creating this greenbelt. With regards to wetlands, generally there is no guarantee that they will not be developed, the County's interest in acquiring wetlands is to protect them.

Nick Gibbons said this area is called Branch Brook Nature Preserve which is part of the Smithtown Greenbelt. Ms. Fischer added that it is also a tributary of the Nissequogue River.

With no further questions Chairman Corwin asked for a motion to approve the acquisition. Trustee Borden made the motion, it was seconded by Trustee McKay, there were none opposed. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Saw Mill Creek: located in the Town of Riverhead, in the Hamlet of Riverhead, it was also on last years Master List and also falls under the Multifaceted Open Space Preservation Program for passive recreation. Here they're trying to protect a green corridor that flows into the Peconic River and is an important tributary to the Flanders Bay area of the Peconic Bay. The parcel is 5.6 acres and located just north of East Main Street. They are reaching out to other owners in the area for further purchases to protect this watershed. The Peconic Estuary Program identifies Saw Mill Creek as one of their critical watersheds for protection in the Peconic Estuary System.

Trustee Cardillo said he passed by this parcel and noted that the "for sale" sign was still on the property, and added property is being bought up quickly in Riverhead. Ms. Fischer replied that they have a willing seller, when they come before the Trustees and get their approval, it's a done deal.

Trustee Bender asked if this was located near a new development of condominiums. Ms. Longo replied that the condos are located down the road a little bit.

With no further questions Chairman Corwin asked for a motion to approve the acquisition. Trustee Cardillo made the motion, it was seconded by Vice Chairman Colina, there were none opposed. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Mud Creek Watershed: located in East Patchogue, Town of Brookhaven, consisting of two lots that are part of a watershed area the County wishes to acquire and is adjacent to the Unitarian Church property previously purchased by the County. The size is .38 of an acre and falls under

the Multifaceted Open Space Preservation Program for passive recreation. Ms. Longo said they have quite a few accepted offers in this area. They are working to possibly get the Army Corps of Engineers to do wetland remediation.

With no questions, Chairman Corwin asked for a motion to approve the acquisition. Vice Chairman Colina made the motion, it was seconded by Trustee McKay, there were none opposed. The motion passed 7-0-0.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

Remains and Artifacts found at Indian Island - Testing did not conclusively determine exactly what the remains were, they were assumed to be Native American because the artifacts found with them were Native American. The Inter-Tribal Burial Task Force, along with the Shinnecock and the Pouspatuck presided over a reburial ceremony of everything that was found a couple weeks ago. Nick Gibbons has sent in a permit application to the DEC to rectify the erosion and protect the road.

Seatuck/Scully Contract - The process is making its way through formulation of the details, although slowly. Seatuck has the latest version of the contract and the Director, Enrico Nardone, is meeting with their Board of Directors to iron out any problems that they might have. He hasn't heard of any major problems and they are making progress. The necessary resolutions have all passed in the Legislature.

Discussion ensued regarding the request of Mr. Ratay of the APHH to speak before the Trustees at the January meeting. As the APHH is a very large group, Chairman Corwin and Vice Chairman Colina expressed their concern that they would like that meeting to be productive and not have an overwhelming number of speakers and should perhaps convey this to Mr. Ratay.

Trustee McKay is concerned that, based on his letter and their conversation before the meeting, that Mr. Ratay seems to have the impression that the Board of Trustees is a policy-making group. Chairman Corwin said that the APHH needs to understand that the Legislature is the policy-making entity, the Trustees can advise or give opinions, but that there is a separation of powers in the County that they need to understand.

The Commissioner also mentioned that there is a Resolution in the Legislature to replace Trustee Miller on the Board of Trustees. It goes before the Legislature on Tuesday but it could possibly be tabled until next year.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Chairman Corwin said he had nothing to report but did remind the Trustees to RSVP each month to the meetings to assure we will have a quorum for voting. He also asked Vice Chairman Colina if he had an e-mail address to give it to Mary Simonsen in order to share documents and information between themselves and the Commissioner's office more readily.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS:

Vice Chairman Colina thanked and praised the staffs of Parks and Planning for their work and for their support of the Parks Trustees. Thanks to all of you for a job well done and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on January 19, 2006 at 1:00 p.m. at Coindre Hall. Once the Legislative committee calendar is set, we will have an accurate Trustees meeting date and time schedule for 2006 for distribution.

Chairman Corwin asked if the Trustees would like to meet early before the next meeting to walk portions of the Coindre Hall property, weather permitting. It was decided that the Trustees would meet at Coindre Hall at 11:30 to walk the Coindre Hall property. The luncheon will be at noon with the meeting to follow at 1:00.

Chairman Corwin called for a motion to close the meeting at 11:45 a.m. Vice Chairman Colina made the motion, seconded by Trustee McKay. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Simonsen.